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THE TRAGEDY OF DUBLIN

AN EXPOSITION IN 3 ACTS

BY
ALPHA AND OMEGA



DUBLIN
THE TALBOT PRESS, LIMITED

1917

saybrook 1635 ipswich

bass river 1630

saalem 1629

stage fort 1623



york 1637

harvard hall 1638

guilford 1639

ELLA FRIEND MIELZNER

BLIGHT

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THE VOICES IN THE PLAY ARE

STANISLAUS TULLY	<i>An Unskilled Labourer</i>
MRS. MARY FOLEY	<i>His Sister</i>
LILY	<i>Her Daughter</i>
JIMMY	<i>Her Crippled Son</i>
GEORGE FOLEY	<i>(a discharged soldier) her Husband</i>
MISS MAXWELL-KNOX	<i>District Visitor</i>
MRS. LARISSEY	<i>A Neighbour</i>
JIMMY LARISSEY	<i>A Cabman</i>
MR. BANNERMAN	<i>Landlord of the Tenement</i>
MEDICAL DICK	} <i>nth Year Students</i>
MEDICAL DAVY	
TISDALL TOWNSLEY	} <i>Members of the Board of the Townsend Thanatorion</i>
NORRIS GALBRAITH	
WM. MCWHIRTER	
MR. McNULTY	
MR. MORPHY	
MR. TUMULTY	
A CHARWOMAN.	

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ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A dilapidated, beautiful room in a tenement house. Beds right, left and in front left. A clothes-line crosses diagonally, so that a hanging quilt drawn may screen a bed. Beside one bed is a jam-pot on a chair. Washstand and screen at foot between beds at window. A chair for cripple beside fire-place.*

Tully (lying in bed, right). Eh, Mary, are ye awake yet? . . . Are ye awake, Mary. . . ? Mary, surely yet not asleep at this hour.

Mary (lying in bed, left). Well, then, indeed I'm not. Can't ye be awake for a minute without thinking that everyone else is asleep? Sorra much sleep I get between the children and yer-self. I suppose it's a drink ye want?

Tully. Go on; that's right! Why don't you say I'm drunk once for all and aise yer mind, instead of keepin' it in yer brain simmerin'?

Mary. Well if yer not drunk—yer fidgetin' for it. What is it you want?

Tully. I want to know what's keeping little Jim.

Mary. How do I know what's keeping him except the weight of the jug. Don't ye know it's a shame to ask a child like that to go a public-house—to say nothing of the burden on his poor little limbs?

Tully. Don't ye know damn well I can't show me nose out or I'd go meself? I, that am lying here trying to bear up this three weeks to take yez all out of poverty.

Mary. And sorra much ye ever bore; ye haven't as much patience as would get you caught in a shower of rain. How bad ye are can be judged from the food ye ate and the drink ye can lower.

Tully. It's not for us to judge, Mary. That's a matter for the medical profession. Ye mustn't fly in the face of science. If ye could only realise the pain I'm bearing and the agony I'm in—and ye would realise it if ye heard what the doctor said to the solicitor. "Shock," sez he; "collapse," sez he; "incapacitated" and "complete prostration" sez he; then ye would understand how mental suffering is far worse than mere physical suffering, and this will be me evidence: "After hitching wan bag on to the crane an' the ganger gave the signal to hoist, I was in th' act iv bendin' to tie the rope round the next bag to have it ready when the

ring bruck and the bag that was hoisted fell on me spine and left me flat. I remember no more till I woke up in th' hospital a cripple for life, wud a pain in me back an' a drag in me walk that leaves me as wake as a cat when I cross the flure of the room." Them's me symptoms, sorra bit alleviated, and it comes badly from me own sisther to doubt or contradict them, for if ye do yer contradicting yer own future.

Mary. I'm not doubting them. I hope ye'll be well compensated—though it's the only day's work ye ever did that the company's paying for—but it's no reason why ye should have sent that poor child out. How can his poor little back carry a full jug up three flights of stairs?

Tully (mimicking her). How can his poor little back carry the buckets of slops ye send him down three flights of stairs with?

Mary (with a gesture of despair). Sure, what can I do? I can't get up and I can't leave the place in filth?

Tully. Well then, why do ye run away wid the idea that because I wasn't stirring out of bed I wasn't working? There's many a wan works hard without putting a hand to a tool—brain working. Is it because I'm not running round clucking like a hen that ye think I wasn't working out a great idea? That's what I was at and

ye'll see the result of it this very day if they give me compensation in the courts. Sure, my God, woman dear, don't ye know it's a rule of life the less the work the more the wages. Ye have only to look at the judges themselves and the Town Councillors.

Mary A nice judge you'd make.

Tully (*significantly*). No, but I'd make a likely town councillor.

Mary. That'll do yeh !

Tully. If I get compensated according to me injuries I'll buy up Bannermann and go up for the election to the Ward the week afther.

Mary. Buy up Bannermann ? Sure we can't even pay his week's rent. It's not likely he'll sell either.

Tully. I said *if* I get compensation, then it's all plain sailing.

Mary. But Bannerman——

Tully. Ah, leave that fellow to me ! There are sanitary laws in existence that would wipe out Bannermann if they were only put in force. And I'll put them in force to force him to part with this house and the wan next door to it too, or I'm not Stanislaus Tully !

(*Enter Jimmy.*)

Tully. Ah, Jimmy, I thought ye had forgotten yer uncle ! (*Jimmy limps in with a washing-jug full of porter and carries it to the wash-stand, leaving it in the basin.*)

Tully (turning half out of bed). Just walk up to the fireplace and back again until I show your mother the reasons I had for sending you out. (*Jimmy goes back and loiters by door. Tully rises and limps in imitation to close the door.*)

Mary. Mocking is catching.

Tully. I know what's catching (*ladles out a glassful of porter*)—and who's going to catch it. The trial's coming off at twelve o'clock. I must get back now (*returns to bed*) and wait for Jimmy Laroissey and his cab.

Jimmy. Here's Miss Maxwell-Knox!

(*Tully inverts a jam-pot over his glass of stout, gets under the bed-clothes hurriedly, and turns a card on the wall over bed, which reads: "The Kingdom of God is within you." Enter Miss Maxwell-Knox, consulting note-book.*)

Miss M-K. This is Mrs. Foley's room?

Mary. Yes, Miss! Come in, Miss. God bless ye, Miss! Yer very welcome! Were ye able to get Jimmy into hospital?

Tully (in a weak voice, with his eyes fixed on card). Come in, Miss! Yer very welcome, Miss—and so is anywan that's always doin' good. (*Louder*) Get a chair for Miss Maxwell-Knox, ye little blackguard, Jimmy!

Miss M-K. I hope you are better to-day, Tully.

Tully. Ah, I wouldn't say that; I wouldn't say that——

Miss M-K. Have you not got to go to court to-day?

Tully. I have to be brought there, Miss. I hope to have the strength for the journey.

Miss M-K. (*with a grim smile*). You know the source of all strength?

Tully. Aye, indeed. But, incapacitated and completely prostrated as I am since the crane fell . . ."

Miss M-K. No one is incapacitated from prayer nor from forgiveness and mercy. A sparrow cannot fall from the housetop without your Father knowing it, by which is meant that the poor are as important in His eyes as the rich. The poor, who are always with us.

Tully. True for ye! It's on wan of them the bag fell. Now yer talking! The poor we have always wid us—an' it's high time something was done to stop it. As things are going, you'd think it was planned so that the poor would be always here. (*Miss M-K. makes a gesture of horror.*)

Miss M-K. You shouldn't say that, you mustn't say that!

Tully. But it's yerself that said it, and I'm axing is there to be no escape for the poor?

Miss M-K. "They that are lacking shall have abundance."

Tully. That's all very fine and large. Look

at us here—eight in a room when the childer's in. That's the only abundance we have.

Miss M-K. But God helps these that help themselves !

Tully. How are we to help ourselves ? How's Mary there to help herself with her six children ? Only for the Separation Allowance she and them might as well be in the workhouse, even if they could get themselves admitted. Only for that there'd be little for her, and me out of work.

Miss M-K. Yes. . . It's hard, but it gives occasion for fortitude. Without vicissitude that virtue would be lost. There is much that lies in your power to do and you neglect it. For instance, you should practise cleanliness, which is next to godliness. Look at that little boy's face. (*Jimmy is waiting behind chair for lady to sit on*). Just look at that little boy's face—the dirt of it, the neglect ! Come here, my poor dear dirty little boy and I will help to clean your face. (*Takes him by the shoulder and makes to wash-stand, greatly to Tully's horror. Dips in her hand with washing-glove, and draws it out darkened with stout.*) Why, what is this ? (*Smells it.*) Why, it's DRINK ! Drink, you debauched, deceitful wretch ! After all your promises and your pledge and the money I gave you for food ! Drinking again. . . (*Stamps her foot on the floor.*)

Mary. Be careful, Miss. That's wan of the rotten boards ; ye might go through there for it's a bit dozed around the wash-stand. (*Tully sits up in bed with resolute face of dignity offended, puts his hand for silence until he delivers his explanation.*)

Tully. First 'of all, I'm not "drinking" (*imitates her accent*). Secondly, it's not DRINK, for by that you mean drunkenness and self-indulgence.

Miss M-K. What is it then if it isn't drink ?

Tully (composedly). In spite of all your charitable work—and indeed I may say, your charity—it's sad to see how little you know how the poor live—or—how they don't live. I told you that when the childer comes in from school and Lily comes in from the laundry we'll be eight in this room. With the childer crying from the cold or hunger—as the case may be—how is the wage earner to get a night's rest in a bed where there isn't room to turn ? Jimmy there and his big brother lies in my bed. With noise, misery and vermin rest is impossible, not to talk of sleep. Man, woman and child must live, sleep, dress, cook and eat and wash body and clothes in this wan place. Why don't you ask us why we are huddled here together without distinction of sexes ? No, ye don't ! That would raise one of these questions about capital and labour that touch upon vested interest

and are so embarrassing. Ye prefer the cheap and easy cant about drink. Why do we drink? Because we want to sleep, because it's cheaper than chloroform! Who could stand this living hell without drink? Suppose ye had three childer in the bed with ye like Mary there and was expecting a baby, how are ye to get up and cook food? Isn't the milk of the city liquid filth, and if it wasn't wouldn't it get filthy standing in a room with all the slops—while a pint of porter is eating and drinking. Was it drink gave Jimmy his diseased hip? The worst thing drink does is that it brings us visits from the likes of you. For it's not to do good ye came here; ye kem here to get yer self-complacency stroked down wud the smoothing-iron of our vices. It's all drink, drink, and nothing else. Yer putting the cart before the horse, me lady. Poverty *first*, then dirt and disease and discontent and vice follow, and your preaching. Was it drink sent Georgie to the war for the sake of the Separation Allowance? Did it ever strike you that nothing good was ever done by preaching in this town? What built Findlater's Church? Was it preaching or drink? Drink. And the new hostel in Hatch street? Drink. What put a roof on Christ Church Cathedral? Drink. What renovated St. Patrick's and cleared Bull Alley? Drink. What gave us Stephen's Green—Drink—and the

ducks swimming in it ! Drink doesn't keep us poor ; but poverty makes us drink.

Miss M-K. But it's quite unfair to insinuate that if wine merchants and brewers elect to leave money to build churches, therefore religion depends on drink.

Tully. No ; but it's addicted to religion in an extraordinary way !

Mary. In the name of God, Stanney, what are ye saying to the lady ? Don't mind him, Miss. He's excited about going to Court to-day, and his spine's injured—I wouldn't be surprised if it's getting up into his brain. He doesn't mean to be insulting. Besides, when he talks for the sake of speaking he can't help being offensive any more than one of them orators once he gets going. Stannie, ye ought to have manners enough to keep yer mouth shut before the lady.

Tully. What do ye mean, Mary, be saying that I'm insulting ? I never meant to give offence, but when she puts her hand into me night's rest and me morning's breakfast there it's enough to make any invalid—and invalids are always irritable—complain. I'm very sorry indeed, Miss Maxwell-Knox, if I said anything to hurt ye. If I had meant to be insulting I'd have handed ye back yer card (*points to text*). I only meant to say that without porter there would be no repose for the poor.

Miss M-K. But look at the harm it does, and the money it wastes that could be spent on other things! If I had known that you did not adhere strictly to your resolutions to be abstemious I would not have troubled you with my presence.

Mary. Ah, don't mind him, Miss! It's good ye are doing. If ye can only get poor little Jimmy into hospital.

Tully. Surely ye wouldn't neglect your duty to extend a helping hand to the poor and weak and the weak-minded?

(Enter Lily in fur coat. Looks boldly at Miss M-K. and draws quilt hanging on clothes-line to screen her bed. Powders her face and whistles while arranging her hair. Miss M-K. seeing her, looks her up and down critically with lorgnette.)

Miss M-K. The wages of sin is death.

Lily *(singing "Hi tiddy li-i-ti. Carry me back to Blighty,"* makes a gesture at Miss M-K. with her fingers and thumb.)

Miss M-K. The wages of sin is death.

Lily. The wages of sin is a month in the Locke. *(Attempts to go out but is opposed by Miss M-K.)*

Miss M-K. Why are you not at the laundry doing honest work?

Lily. Because I didn't get honest wages—if ye want to know.

Mary. Lily is in a restaurant, Miss. Don't mind her, she'll be going out shortly.

Lily. I am. I'm in a restaurant and I get seven and six a week and two rounds of bread and margarine and a cup of tay, and free temptation, which is more than comes in other people's way (*making a face aside*).

Miss M-K. May I inquire where you are going?

Lily. Will ye go look and ax?

Miss M-K. If I were you, my poor girl, I would not go on the streets.

Lily (surveying her). Sure, I'd know by the old beak of ye, ye wouldn't.

(*Enter Mrs. Larissey.*)

Mrs. L. Will ye whist! Mary, here's Mr. Bannermann for the rent.

Miss M-K. (excitedly). You are a matron, I presume, and I appeal to you to add your influence to any influence for good that I may possess and join with me in preventing this young girl from living a life of viciousness and sin!

Mrs. L. If ye can't mind yer own business, ye can interview her father if he comes back from the fighting; meanwhile ye ought to turn yer activities on the landlord of these mansions who is coming up the stairs with a Notice to Quit for herself and the baby unborn in the bed there.

(*Enter a boy.*)

Boy. Here's Bannermann, mother, to put us out!

Miss M-K. Good gracious, no! . . . I will sympathise, but—

Mrs. L. I suppose ye will go on talking about vice and calling me a matron and see this poor woman and her six children flung out into the street? That's what sends girls like Lily on the town, if ye want to know.

Miss M-K. What does it matter compared to the enormity of sin? Poverty is innocent. To be poor is no one's fault; but to be sinful, to brazen it out. . .

Mary. Well, all I can say is that when the Little Sisters of the Poor were here and seen Lily they made no remarks like that.

Tully. No, nor the Vincent de Pauls!

Mrs. L. Arrah, will ye go 'long to hell and keep that kind of talk for them that sent her there. Do ye want that poor woman's child to be born in the streets? Mebbe ye'd prefer the workhouse. But I'll see that so long as there's breath in me body, nobody will put her out of this. (*Folds her arms.*)

Tully. What's that ye are saying, Mrs. Larissey, about Lily being sent on the streets? You'd think ye had as bad a mind as Miss Maxwell-Knox, who sees the devil or drink in everything, and sorra bit of good anywhere.

Lily is as dacent a girl as there is in Gloucester Street !

Mrs. L. Wasn't it she that said it, the ould faggot. (*Going up to Miss M-K.*) If I'd a heard ye I'd have flung ye out body and bones meself. . . . (*Enter Bannermann, collector.*) If it's good ye're after maybe ye'll explain to this fellow how Mrs. Foley is to pay him 4/6 a week and keep her six children and the baby that's coming on the pay of her husband who got a job at the Front ?

Miss M-K. Don't call it a "job," Mrs. Larissey. He is fighting for humanity and civilisation, as every able-bodied man should be !

Mary. He's trying to keep a roof over our head.

Tully. He's sorting letters somewhere in France.

Mrs. L. If, instead of criticising the poor, ye want to help them, will ye tell us how is Mrs. Foley to pay 4/6 for her room and keep six childer—and one of them a cripple—on it ?

Bannermann (*pinning Notice to Quit on the door*). I'm just pinning this to keep things in order. If ye pay before the week's out, well and good. I wish ye luck to-day, Stan.

Tully. I'll see ye paid all right, Mr. Bannermann. For peace sake, Miss Knox, or the love of God, go home out of that before Mrs. Larissey gets—indignant..

Lily. So long. I'm off. (*To Miss M-K.*) Good-bye, Vigilance! (*Exit.*)

Jimmy (*calling after her*). Will ye have any chocolates for me, Lily, when ye come home in the morning?

Miss M-K. You can settle your own disputes. I shall no longer extend my help where there is nothing but ingratitude and ill desert. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. L. Good riddance. Sorra loss!

Tully. Yes, that's the way, ye're always going on decrying the rich and forgetting to do anything to help yourselves from being poor. Ye can abuse Miss Knox to yer heart's content, but abuse is cheap and useless. If ye want to make the likes of her sit up ye must stand by yerselves, stand by me. Don't forget there's a vacancy in this ward, and I'm the man to fill it.

Mrs. L. Ye look better able to fill what yer in.

Tully. Don't be facetious, Mrs. Larissey. It's facetiousness that distracts ladies of wit like you from the serious things of life. Who can represent you better than one of yourselves, a man of the people and for the people—and I've already been promised strong support if the lawsuit comes off all right; but we'll want all yer wit to get me in.

Mr. Bannermann. Is it this ward ye intend to represent?

Tully. Yes, it is! And sorra wan round

here will have a chance against a democrat in a democratic constituency.

Bannermann. Dublin's looking for men with a stake in the city, and not lodgers to represent the Ward. How can property owners like myself afford to pay 12/- in the £ rates and keep a house like this in repair, if we have to support the likes of you on the Corporation?

Tully. A stake in the city. Ye'd like to narrow the franchise, would ye? A tenement in a slum, that's what ye represent, and the day I'm elected Town Councillor the effect of my counselling will be pretty soon felt by you, me lad! I suppose you want to bully me poor sister out of 4/6 for a bed in a corner of this rotten room.

Mrs. L. Leave her alone till she gets little Jimmy into hospital, and God bless you, Mr. Bannermann!

Bannermann. And even if I have a tenement house or two I am not the only corporator with an interest in tenements; and it comes well indeed from you, sponging here on your sister and devouring my rent in idleness and drink.
(Exit.)

(Enter a jarvey and his friend.)

Jarvey. Are ye ready, Stan?

Tully. Ah, more power, me sound min. Come 'ere, me butties an' give us a hand. I'm that prostrated that I'm not able to move.

D'ye think I'll be fit for the stairs? (*They help him out of bed.*) Put the left leg on the floor first—it's lucky.

Jarvey. Begorra, this is a five shilling' job. Make it ten shillings if ye win and nothing if ye lose.

Tully. Done me friend. I'm wid ye!

Labourer. What about puttin' on yer Sunday blue?

Tully. D'ye want me to be dressed up like a stockbroker? No begob? I'll go as the Company sent me home—tattered and torn and smashed up be the crane. (*They put on his boots.*) Where's me muffler, Mary?

Mary. Where would it be but where ye left it?

Tully. I suppose it's on the piano with me clogs. . . Oh! be careful of me poor back!

Labourer. Begob it would never do to waste a creak of it till we get you down to Green Street. (*He takes his crutch, they help him out.*)

Mary. Good luck to ye, Stannie!

Tully (on the stairs). Heave easy, boys, ye carry Caesar!

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE—*Same as in Act I.*

Mary. Is that you, Jimmy? (*Enter Jimmy with paper hat.*) See who's coming up the stairs It's hardly time for yer uncle to be back yet. (*Jimmy goes out; re-enters.*)

Jimmy. Mother, here's Medical Dick from Phibsboro'.

Mary. Ye mustn't call the gentleman names, but learn to have respect for yer superiors. He's a very kind doctor and much better than the usual midwifery cases they send out.

(*Enter Medical Dick, smoking a cigarette and carrying a bag.*)

Med. Dick. May I come in, Mrs. Foley? How are ye to-day?

Mary. Run out of this, Jimmy, and play on the lobby, that's a good child. (*Exit Jimmy.*) Won't you sit down.

Med. Dick (drawing chair). Ye aren't feeling any pains, Mrs. Foley?

Mary. No sir—I think it will be a day or two yet. I'd like that it ud be you that would attend me if ye could, sir. Will ye be on duty all the week?

Medical D. Well, I'm in a difficulty. I have to take out one more conduction case or they won't let me up for th' exam. on Monday ; and I have to go to Baldoyle, for my uncle has a sure thing running to win me back my fees. If I miss either you or it I'm done for.

Mary. So it's a race between the horse and the baby.

Medical D. (embarrassed). Well, what I mean is . . . of course . . . there are other men on night duty that could relieve me ; but I'm staying on duty specially watching you night and day, as it were, and exam. or no exam., I'd be as careful of you as if you were—er—as if you were me first.

Mary. I'm sure ye will, sir ! I'd like to have yerself, sir, ye were so lucky with the last—though ye came a bit late.

Medical D. I'll send down a nurse that's a great pal of mine and she will let me know how ye are. If I'm out atself the porterness in the hall will know where to find me.

(Enter Jimmy excitedly.)

Jimmy. Oh, mother, uncle's coming home ! Half the street is after him and he has no crutch. *(Runs to window and looks out through the broken pane.)* Here's the cab coming round the bend !

Mary (excitedly). Is yer uncle in it ?

Jimmy. No.

Mary. Ah !

Jimmy. No, he's sitting with his arm round the driver on the box ; Jack Dempsey's marching in front like a band-conductor twirling the crutch. Mother, they're coming ! Uncle's coming home ! (*Runs excitedly through the door.*)

Medical D. Are ye feeling weak, Mrs. Foley ?

Mary (breathless). No, it's only the palpitation I have when the wind gets congealed round me heart. . . Oh, I hope he's won ! . . . It would mean such a lot to us all . . . Oh, if you please—if it isn't too much—would you mind puttin' yer head out to see what's happened ?

Medical D. What happened to who ? (*Cheering heard from the street. Great noise in the hall.*)

Mary. Oh, I hear them on the stairs . . he's won, he's won ! (*falls back in a faint.*)

(*Medical Dick takes her pulse. Enter Tully, thrust in with his two friends, cabmen and labourer banging him on the back.*)

Tully. Three hundred pounds !

Medical D. Hush man ! Mrs. Foley has just fainted.

Tully (concerned). It's nothing serious, I hope. Would a drop of this be any good ? (*produces naggin. Exeunt friends on tiptoe.*)

Medical D. Open the window.

Tully. Begob it ud be too bad if poor Mary went off before hearing of the wages for me one day's work.

Mary. Oh, I'm all right now.

Tully. Break the news to her, break the news. (*Comes and whispers loudly.*) Three hundred pounds!

Mary (smiling). Please God it will do you good. Don't forget you promised to get little Jimmy looked after.

Tully. Never fear, Mary. How are ye feeling now?

Mary. Grand again!

Tully. Aye, I thought there was something reviving in three hundred pounds.

Medical D. Claim under Workmen's Compensation?

Tully. Begor it was—Employer's Liability.

Mary. How did ye do it, Stannie?

Tully. Sit aisy there and I'll tell ye all. Mebbe, sir, you'll understand the medical words. I don't mind telling ye it's far from plain to me.

Medical D. You can't expect medical terms to be plain and scientific at the same time?

Tully. There was a shocking wrangling going on when we got down to Court. They smuggled me in quietly at the side-door, and I was kept ready to be produced. Out comes my solicitor—a bald, big-headed, innocent-looking baby of a fellow, but as cute as six ould min. "Have you any sensation in the legs?" sez he, in a whisper. "Awful!" sez I. "Non-sense," sez he; "ye don't feel them at all!"

“ In the name of heaven ! . . is it after me three week’s suffering . . ? ” “ That’ll do ye ” sez he. “ Remember now, not even if they stick you with a pin ! ” “ Is all me agony to go for nothing ? ” sez I. “ Which of us is conducting the case ? ” sez he. “ On which of us did the bag fall,” sez I. “ That’ll do ye now,” sez he. Then he pulls out me little bearded doctor while the big ones were swearing. “ Mind you, now ; total absence of sensation, Tully,” he said, “ and I’m sorry to hear it.” “ Let yer legs swing loose,” sez he ; “ but keep thinking of yer knees all the time if they strike ye on the knee-caps.” “ Where does me spine come in ? ” I asked. “ I can demonstrate what I mean if you like, me lord,” I heard the big surgeon saying. “ Vivisection ! ” shouts me little doctor, who is as cute as a rat, “ ye’ll subject my patient to no such indignity ! ” “ I did not mean on the plaintiff, my lord. Protect me from this abominable innuendo.”

Med. D. What was the abominable innuendo ?

Tully. Wasn’t he goin’ to wriggle me spine before the whole court. “ I have too much surgical instinct for that, I hope,” sez the big surgeon, in a hell of a wax. “ It could all be accounted for by an attack of acute anterior poliomyelitis ” sez he then. I looked round, but my solicitor had disappeared. “ Infantile paralysis in a man of fifty ! ” sez the ratty little doctor with

the beard. "Or spina bifida?" sez someone else. "What's that?" the Judge snaps out: "I've had enough of this (a poor man's Judge!) The injuries you mention are grave injuries anyway. Even if it were a case of infantile paralysis—which is a misnomer if a man has to wait to get it until he is forty-five—even if it could be got since the fall of the crane belonging to the company, while in the employment of the company and doing the company's work, the maximum sum I'm entitled . . ." "Whist, me lord, my clients have settled by consent." Then back comes my big solicitor, looking very aggrieved. "I'm afraid three hundred pounds will hardly pay you for the loss of a spine," sez he.

Mary. Well glory be to God for that anyway.

Medical Dick. And did you say nothing?

Tully. Iv course I did. I said "How could I have put the chain round the bag if the sack was empty?"

Medical D. Now what do you intend to do?

Tully (grandiosely). I'm thinking of taking up social reform.

Medical D. Why, it's only people with independent means can indulge themselves with social reform.

Tully (sarcastically). Doctors differ, me lad. Doctors differ.

Medical D. And why shouldn't they? So

do diseases. When the public pay varying fees for opinions they are entitled to their money's worth. Surely you don't want doctors to be all as uniform as a box of Beecham's Pills ? "

(Enter Bannermann.)

Tully. Ah, never fear ! Back again for yer four and sixpence ?

Bannermann. I'm glad to hear ye were so successful.

Tully. I don't doubt ye ; but before me sister pays you the rent it's my duty to see that she's getting her money's worth, and not putting herself into the clutches of the law by paying you. . .

Bannermann. What are you talking about ?

Tully. If she pays 4/6 a week for this room before you make the floor safe, before you put a water-tap on the lobby, before you put the stairs and hall in a safe and sanitary condition, before you provide a water-closet for less than forty-seven people—male and female—before you disinfect the kitchen where old McLoughlin died of typhus—which they called enteric in the death certificate—before you whitewash the passages and repair those windows, she will be guilty of complicity in a plot against the health of the city, from which even your nephew the Sanitary Inspector, will be unable to extricate her.

Bannermann. Plots against public health !

You are talking through your hat ! There's no such thing.

Tully. What, no public health ?

Bannermann. Whether there is or not, no one would believe in a plot against it. I must trouble you, Mrs. Foley, for this week's rent and three weeks' arrears.

Tully. You can take your choice now. Serve your process for the rent and wait till ye get it. There's not a lodger in the place will pay ye now until I give the word, and that word won't pass me lips until ye put this verminous warren into the semblance of a habitation fit for even the lowest grade of human beings. It's not that ye haven't been told about it often enough.

Bannermann. So that's yer game ! A no-rent campaign against house-property holders !

Tully. It's very far from being a game, it is a solemn protest from your tenants against the delay in carrying out repairs. I have said nothing against over-crowding. Do you know how many souls sometimes take—what I can't call shelter—under this roof ? Do you ? You don't, and you the landlord. And ye don't know either what the Inspector of Dangerous Buildings has in his mind with regard to this ramshackle edifice. Let me tell you he was down here photographing the crack over the hall door lately with a minister and one or two of the boys

Bannermann. That'll do ye now. None of yer bluff! Let *me* tell *you* that it wasn't the Inspector that was doing the photography, but the Georgian Society. I heard Professor Mahaffy himself saying that he never seen such a house.

Tully. It ud be hard for him. Is there any harm in asking you what it cost you?

Bannermann. Well, there is not. This and—you know I acquired the adjoining edifice recently—well, this and that stood me in, what with structural alterations to make it suitable for single-room dwellings, the best part of £320.

Tully. God help you (*deprecatingly*). God help you! When ye come to put this house in a sanitary condition it will cost ye another £320.

Bannermann. Put yerself in my position as a landlord. I want to get a reasonable interest on the money invested.

Tully. I wouldn't be in your position for the whole street.

Bannermann. And I don't want to throw good money after bad, even if I had it to throw away. I wouldn't be at all sorry if I disposed of the whole estate to-morrow.

Tully. Wouldn't ye now? Ye'll be hard set to find a buyer, I'm thinking. Nobody dare touch it but a member of the Corporation, and

they have so many irons in the fire that they're nearly putting it out.

Bannermann. Weren't you saying that ye intended to go up for the Ward yerself?

Tully. Yes, but you know. No decent man likes getting mixed up in these elections. If it weren't that I am more or less forced to go forward in the Ward's interests, I wouldn't think of public life.

Bannermann. But you would have a better chance if ye had a holding in the Ward.

Tully (slowly and slyly). Ah . . . that's what yer driving at! I'm not sure that the responsibility of being the owner of your property wouldn't be worse than the responsibility of representing the Ward.

Bannermann. What responsibility are you talking about? Don't you know you'd be on the pig's back if you once got on the Corporation?

Tully. Is that all ye know? Well, I'll tell ye the responsibility. The representatives of a poor Ward like this have a great charge. If Merrion Square and the respectable parts of the town got to know of the conditions under which the poor live they'd be down on me like a hundred of bricks—it ud be worse than the bag on me back.

Bannermann. Rest easy if the public spirit of Dublin is all ye have to fear!

Tully. Ye talk as if there was neither care nor knowledge in the city. Who framed the sanitary regulations? D'ye think the doctors don't know what should be and what shouldn't? Who sends all the money out of the town yearly for missions and acts of Christian charity? D'ye think that the God-fearing people would rise up with holy indignation and denounce me if they found me only as much as representing conditions such as you own? D'ye want me to believe that there's neither science nor charity nor the love of God in Dublin? D'ye want me to believe that all the clergymen and doctors that live by humanity are no more humanitarians than your nephew or yourself? D'ye want me to believe it's to China they'd be sending to save babies if they knew that here, under their very noses, 4 or 5 babies are perishing every day of the week. Why, my God, man, ye never know the day that saving babies might become fashionable and the society ladies be rushing down half stripping themselves for charity in the Theatre Royal. It's a fine ye ought to give me to relieve ye of yer responsibility and take the property out of yer hands.

Bannermann. And a nice reception they'd get if they did come trying to do good. Look at the way you treated Miss Maxwell-Knox.

Mary. Stanislaus, wouldn't it be better for us to take a cottage in the country? There'd

be fresh air for Jimmy and room for the children to play.

Medical Dick. But country bred children cannot stand conditions in the towns.

Mary. God forgive me ; mebbe it would be better if there was no towns.

Tully (in a whisper). If it warn't that herself is aginst it I might make ye an offer. How long have ye held them ?

Bannermann. Six years.

Tully. Oh, you've sucked the juice out of them. I thought of offering you a hundred pounds.

Bannermann. What ! for the two ?

Tully. No, fifty for the wan.

(Bannermann walks up and down uncertain.)

Tully. Mind yerself there, the floor isn't safe. Maybe you'll kill a few children if ye shake the ceiling off the room below.

Bannermann. For ready money—that is, cash down—I might see my way to parting with the house you're in for £100.

Tully (producing a roll of notes with pain from his back pocket, and holding up one). D'ye see that fellah ? Take it now and escape before the whole place collapses.

Bannermann. Put another £25 to it.

Tully. What ! and not leave meself enough to get the place cleaned' !

(Bannermann shakes his head.)

Tully. I'll toss ye for ten or twenty.

Bannermann. Done. I'll give you the title if you let me go next door. (*Exit.*)

Mary. In the name of God, what do ye mane?

Tully (pointing mysteriously to earth). Whisht, Mary, there's a gold mine underneath. Yer sleeping on a gold-mine. Wait until they try to improve the street. Slum's soil's as valuable as the sacred earth of Glasnevin Cemetery. Even if it wasn't, ye'd never know when the Government might take it into their heads to blow the place up and pay for it afterwards. (*Shouts from street, "Speech, Tully!" Cheering. "Tully, a speech!"*)

Tully (jerking his trousers). Oh, begob, it's up to me now!. (*Runs to basin for refreshment.*)

(*Increased shouts. Leans sideways from basin and shows himself at window. Roars of applause. Wipes his mouth and throws up the sash. His crutch is thrown in.*)

Mary. God save us, are they mad? What's that?

Tully (lifting crutch and putting it aside). A memoir of me dead life. Whist now, Mary, and hear me address me constituents. Boys, I'm glad to see you. Glad to be able to address you all together as I would address everyone of you singly if I had the chance in the course of a

day's work ; that is, as labouring man to labouring man, as friend to friend (*cheers*). We have been living a long time together and enduring things a long time together that we don't intend to endure any longer (*cheers*). We've stood interference (*cheers*), and bullying (*cheers*), and oppression (*loud cheers*), and we've borne them all in patience (*cheers*), and, what is worse, in conditions that were not fit for pigs much less human beings (*cheers*). But now there is an end to all that (*cheers*). Those days are gone for ever, as if by a miracle, and why ? The answer is very simple : why is there an end of misery and oppression ? Because we know our own power *now* (*cheers*). We know what it is to work together. Who is it that the capitalists and rulers of the world are organised and plotting to keep under ? Men like you and me ; hard-working labouring men. How can they do it ? Because the people are divided and they are united. But against a united people where are they ? But if we are to be rulers we must organise ourselves. Union is strength (*cheers*). You are out to beat Capital. We are out to beat Capital even as I bet it (*cheers*). How is it to be done ? We can't all represent ourselves. We chose a man we know ; above all, a man we can trust—a man that knows what he's up against, a man that cannot be coddled by any amount of cajoling. A man that will

not play you false ; better still, a man whose interests and your interests are identical : a man, therefore, that cannot play you false. (*A Voice* : " How is yer back ? ") Nobody can say yer not fit to govern yourselves if ye send me to Cork Hill. If I yield to pressure and accept the heavy responsibility of representing you and your homes and tender children, our darling little ones, in this Ward, it's because I know what I'm doing (*cheers*). Because I have a stake in this Ward. Not much of a stake, but enough of a stake to be able to announce to you that the arrears of rent, for instance, in this house need not be paid. (*cheers*). Small though it be, the men who hold bigger stakes forsake the citizens—it's not in the Corporation you'll find Iveagh and Jamieson, but in the Kildare Street Club. If I go forward and do my duty how will ye know it ? The coal fund will be there to inform you. And you can trust a man who owns a house among the people to look after the interests of the people. It doesn't do to cry : " Down with the rich ! " and forget to say : " Up the People ! " We need but stick together and we'll shake Capitalism off our back as a terrier shakes canal water out of its hide. (*A Voice* : " As you shook off the sack.") Talking about cranes (*laughter*), reminds me we have a weight to lift off all our backs (*cheers*). Off the back of each worker, wife and child in

the city of Dublin. And that takes me further. Dublin is the capital of Ireland and we are the citizens of the capital city of Ireland, and we won't tolerate any foreign ascendancy (*loud cheers*)—no, nor what's worse, local ascendancy (*increased cheers*). Ye'll hear people sneering at the tenements of dirty Dublin. Well, let me tell them that many a good man was brought up in a tenement (*cheers*). When they want their battles to be fought isn't it to the tenements of Dublin they have to come? Wasn't it out of this very house that me own brother-in-law went out to the front (*cheers and cries of "Up Tully!"*) If we're poor itself, we're proud, and we won't be insulted. We ask only for our rights and nobody's bloody criticism. You'll hear a lot about "dirty" Dublin and the Corporation; but was it the Corporation broke the men who built these houses and left them derelict? (*No!"*) Was it 'the Corporation made people so poor that whole families were glad enough to shelter in a garret or back kitchen? Give everyone his due. It wasn't the Corporation but England done it with the Act of Union. Here, within eight hours of the self-styled Capital of Civilisation, a state of living exists worse than could be found amongst the most benighted tribes of savages and enough to justify their annihilation if it was. Where were the slums when Ireland was a

nation? (*cheers*) ; and it's the Corporation will put an end to them (*cheers*). Don't forget there was a Corporation in Dublin before ever there was a tenement house. The only thing that stands between us and tyranny is the Corporation, and it's for the sake of the city in which I was born, and for the sake of the locality in which I was reared, and for the sake of my friends and associates that are making a determined stand for freedom and Ireland a Nation that I ask ye for all our sakes and Ireland's sake to rally round me at the poll. Oh, Dublin, how I love you ! How my heart heaves for you, Gloucester Place ! (*breaking down*). Further I can't trust myself to speak. Don't desert me, boys (*cheers*). (*Shuts the window and moves to washstand for a drink.*)

Mary (*moved*). Well, ye said one true word anyway when ye blamed England.

Tully. And why wouldn't I ? Isn't it better to blame England than have the boys blaming me ? It's only when you're dealing with the people that you find how complicated life can be. They must have something to blame and something to praise, like the gods in the Queen's Theatre. The great secret of politics is to provide them with heroes and villains, and to take care that the villains are far enough away and the heroes within reach. (*Slaps himself on the chest*).

Mary (*disillusioned*). But weren't you in earnest?

Tully (*seeing her disappointment*). Oh, iv course I was! I was only explaining the statesman's point of view.

(*Enter Cabman, Labourer and Mrs. Larissey, slightly drunk.*)

Mrs. L. Aw, me sweet Stannie! Who'd have thought it iv ye! (*Goes up to him admiringly to put her hand under his chin.*) Aw, me sweet child's face! Didn't he larrap it into them, boys!

Cabman. Begob, I never heard the like of it, and it's not wanst or twice that an orator stood on the top of me cab. Begob, he pumped it up at them in fine style. There was a head on that speech like a pint of stale stout.

Mrs. L. He belched it out of him like a fog-horn.

Tully. That'll do ye, boys. "Now that that's all done and over we mustn't forget our lawful debts. (*Pays cabman*) And that'll celebrate the occasion (*to labourer.*)

Labourer. It was one of them fine reassuring speeches that kept its meaning to itself.

Cabman (*withdrawing with labourer*). I hope I'll soon be laving ye as far as Cork Hill.

Mrs. L. Did ye hear him, Mary? Wouldn't it put a bull's heart in ye to hear him? The spits of him itself was like a shower iv rain.

Mary (disconsolate). Aye, indeed, I heard him.

Mrs. L. And why wouldn't ye. They say there's no one going up agin him after that.

Medical D. Look here, Tully, you're no fool, an' now that things have changed with you I want you to get two jugs and two basins for this poor woman.

Tully. Two jugs and two basins? For what?

Medical D. For antiseptic lotion.

Tully. Antiseptic? What do ye mean, Doctor?

Medical D. I mean that in this case we must run no risk of infection.

Tully. Sure the typhus is gone out of the house long ago.

Medical D. It's not typhus I want to guard against, but you must provide basins for lotions so that the usual antiseptic precautions may be taken.

Tully. Ah, now Doctor, if I was you, I wouldn't mind them. Sorra much good they did to little Jimmy an' him born in the Rotunda in an antiseptic chamber wud seven antiseptic doctors standin' around him an' the matron; an' look at meself, where was the basins when I was comin' into the world, I that have a constitution like a horse—fresh as a two-year-old—after gettin' three hundred pounds worth of a belt on me back.

Mrs. L. Be said be the doctor, now, Stannie, an' don't fly in the face of nature.

Tully. Well, have it yer own way, Doctor. Sure they'll do for the election afterwards anyway. (*Medical D. is ready to go out.*) I'll go out with ye now an' you can show me the kind you want. (*Exit with Medical Dick.*)

(*Enter Jimmy.*)

Jimmy. Ah, mother, sure ye won't send me in to hospital again? When I went in last year they only fed me on milk and they wouldn't let me out for the christening.

Mrs. L. Whist now, this time 'twill be different wud yer uncle in the Corporation; they'll give ye ducks' blue eggs, an' yellow butter an' barefooted potatoes.

Jimmy. I don't want to go.

Mrs. Larissey. Whist now, go in like a good boy. Wouldn't th' angel be surprised if he found you here when he kem wud the little baby?

Jimmy (*sniffing and going towards door followed by Mrs. L., who is putting on his cap*). Th' angel ought to be used to it in this street.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE—*The Boardroom of the Townsend Thanatorion. A well-furnished room—large table, fitted for writing in centre ; walls hung with portraits of elderly gentlemen ; several chairs. Two young men in white coats sitting at fire—legs sprawling over chairs and smoking.*

Medical Davy. But do you tell me you, you could get it in the lip ?

Medical Dick. Of course you can ? You can get it anywhere—it mixes with the blood.

Medical Davy. Well, that's extraordinary ! . . . There was a good-looking lassie in the dispensary yesterday when Johnny was taking it and he pointed it out in a sore on her lip. Unless he told us we would not have believed it, and even then a few of us were doubtful, for, of course, nobody believed the lady. She said she got it from a teacup.

Medical Dick. What was she like ?

Medical Davy. She was round and rosy. Oh ! a fine scrumptious piece . . . she lived in Gloucester Street.

Medical Dick. What was her name ?

Medical Davy. Ah! that'll do ye now!

Medical Dick. But, damn it all, if she's got it in the lip . . .

Medical Davy. Oh! . . Her name was Lily Foley, and they sent her to the Locke.

Medical Dick. Lily Foley! There'll be hell about that when her uncle hears it; he is one of the Corporation star turns and represents the Public Health Department on this Board. I remember attending her mother on a midwifery job. She was a nice little girl . . . it's a damn shame!

Medical Davy. So it is; but what the devil is one to do?

Medical Dick. What the devil did they do about small-pox! Isn't every child in the country taken before it's able to talk and injected with cow-pox? Would'nt it be just as simple and neither dirty nor dangerous to test a drop of everybody's blood, and then we'd know how to get rid of it, once we knew where it was? How can it be avoided until its whereabouts is known?

Medical Davy. But can that be done?

Medical Dick. Of course it can! D'ye mean to say ye've never heard of Wassermann's test?

Medical Davy. Of course I have. That's what they did to me when I only had sciatica. But why isn't it done?

Medical Dick. Because of our imported

hypocrisy and because we haven't the courage to face facts ; because we won't realise that prevention is better than cure, because charity must prey on suffering ; because we mix morals even in our medicine.

(Enter Charwoman with duster and bucket ; sniffs the smoke and opens the window ; kneels to scrub the floor.)

Charwoman. Ye're a nice pair wud yer Wild Woodbines destroyin' the sterilization and the Board comin' up !

Medical Dick. What ! Is there another Board to-day ?

Charwoman. Wouldn't ye know that be the fire being lit ? Wouldn't ye know it by my presence here, I that have been appointed charwoman to the Hospital Board ?

Medical Dick. That was a nice job anyhow, Mrs. Larrisey !

Mrs. L. What d'ye mean ?

Medical Dick. Appointing you Charwoman to the Board of this hospital with work for only one day in the week.

Mrs. L. Be the terms of my appointment I should work only one day in the week, and I would'nt only for the matron.

Medical Dick. Ah, ah ! is she down on you too ?

Mrs. Larissey. She has me in early in the mornings the Board's sitting, acting as lady's

maid if ye please, fittin' her into her stays.

Medical Dick. Only one day's work and a friend of the Matron—that's what I call striking it lucky, Mrs. Larissey. I hope when I'm qualified they'll give me a sinecure position.

Mrs. Larissey (offended) Sinecure position! None of yer jeering: All I will say is that when you're qualified, and the matron gets into her new corset, a great future will be overhanging the Dublin poor.

Medical Davy. Don't mind him, Mrs. Larissey; he's never in earnest. Tell us what's the Board meeting for now.

Charwoman. What's the Board for now, and theyafther gettin' thirty thousand pounds beould MacNab's death, an' they sackin' wan another and rulin' wan another out of order to see which of them will have the spending of it? An' without that at all they'll be sittin' on the soldier for sleepin' in the flower-bed all last night. Thirty thousand pounds! Ho, that will build a new operating theatre. Ay, and a wing for skin trouble, or an observation ward where they put you in to wait for a disease.

Medical Davy. Which of them will get it? Ten to one McWhirter will grab the lot and do all the plumbing of the place over again.

Medical Dick. Tisdall Townsley will buy a few old Masters to hang in the corridors. I heard him say the hospital would be complete if they

acquired Rembrandt's lesson in anatomy to hang in the Board room. What would you say, Mrs. Larissey, to the lesson in anatomy.

Mrs. Larissey. Ye'd better ax the inatron—I'm thinking if they spent a few hundred on letting out the childer for fresh air from the childer's ward they'd be less need to be building wings. The poor sees little of it anyway.

Medical Dick. O, I'm surprised, Mrs. Larissey ; the Board charwoman of all people to doubt the efficacy of the hospital for treating sick children.

Mrs. Larissey. It's fresh air I'd give them and no treatment. What's the good of feeding the little creatures for a few days and then throwing them back where they caught the diseases. Its like spittin' on a herrin' when the sea's dried up.

Medical Dick. Evidiently you are a believer in prophylaxis, Mrs. Larissey.

Mrs. Larissey. Is it any business of yours what religion I am ? (*whisking the duster at them*). Be off out o' this if ye don't want the Board to be sitting on the pair of ye too !

Exit Medical Davy (singing) :

“ As I was going down Sackville Street
Who did I meet but Sandy O,
His kilt had fallen down to his feet
Leaving him bare and bandy O ! ”

(*Exeunt Students on left. Enter frock-coated gentlemen, pompous, fussy and middle-aged.*)

Charwoman (taking up the refrain she polishes the floor) :

“ In came the nurse with a poultice hot,
Who was it for but Sandy O ! ”

Norris (1st *Gent.*). Good gracious, what an atmosphere ! Who is responsible for this ?

Charwoman. I dunno, sir, it must have been the man that was mending the telephone this morning. (*Exit, leaving bucket under table.*)

(*Enter second Old Gentleman.*)

Tisdall (2nd *Gent.*). Ah, good morning *Norris*.

Norris. Good morning, good morning. Just give me a moment while I turn on this electric fan. Ah, it's you *Tisdall*. Glad to see you. Glad you were able to come. I wonder who'll be third.

Tisdall. Oh, yes I forgot. Third man in of course takes the chair. Ten to one it will be that impossible fellow, *Tumulty*. I have actually seen him lurking round corridors, watching to be third man in. I think, as I have always thought, and I say it once again, that it is a perfectly absurd rule. I, as senior member, ought to be chairman, *ex officio*, and then we would not always have *Tumulty* in except when he thinks he can discover a scandal in the hospital to embarrass his colleagues on the

Board. Just for curiosity's sake, let us watch the door.

—*Norris*. You'll find 'he'll not be late this morning, since there is so much money at our disposal.

Tisdall. Well, he surely cannot expect any of this money for some madcap scheme of turning Merrion Square and the best places in the city into schools for Ragged Children.

Norris. Here's someone coming now!

(Enter Charwoman who takes bucket from under the table.)

Charwoman. Excuse me, gentlemen; I'll take this with me in case it might be interfering with the action of your feet.

(Exit, wiping her nose on the end of her apron.)

Norris. What a dreadful country.

Tisdall. Quite hopeless.

Norris. Quite.

(Enter corpulent gentleman, with air of gargantuan mirth, he wears florid button-hole, and carries magnificent walking-stick.)

Morphy (3rd Gent.) Ha, my gallant colleagues. And how are you all to-day? Getting into harness for a little clear thinking, and administrative thought?

Tisdall. Oh, Morphy, deuced glad to see you. Glad it was you who arrived third. We

don't want our meeting presided over by that crank, Tumulty. If McWhirter and Tully arrive we'll have a quorum without him.

Norris. Somebody is coming now.

(Enter Tully, wearing frock-coat, bowler hat, brilliant blue bow tie and yellow boots.)

Tully. Good morning, gentlemen. It's a soft day.

Morphy. Well, but salubrious nevertheless. I walked this morning about half a mile. The air was delicious, the scenery delightful and divine. One never realises how undulating Raheny is until one walks. O, the panorama of the Wicklow hills!

Tully. Yes, I heard it's a good thing to be perambulating about before breakfast, for them that can afford to live a bit out of the town, but for men like McWhirter and meself we've got to keep our nose to the grindstone and our shoulder to the wheel, so to speak.

Tisdall *(seeing Norris closely scrutinising picture)*. Who would you say that was by, Norris. *(Norris looks closer, without answering)*. Would you attribute it to some 18th century master.

(Norris looks still closer, but does not reply.)

Tisdall *(with diffidence)*. Perhaps I am wrong?

Norris *(rubs his fingers on canvas, then smells his fingers)*. Ha! Hum! Mastic varnish—I thought so.

Tisdall. Who do you think painted it?

Norris (*sternly*). Restored first, varnished afterwards.

Tisdall. Extraordinary how you perceived that !

Norris (*talking to himself*). I think I can detect a certain wilfulness, a certain playfulness in the painter.

Tully. It must be a great picture. You took such a good look at it !

Norris. Yes, yes, I was trying to catch the master's meaning. When you look at a picture you should always ask yourself " What did the artist mean by it ? "

Tully. Indade now, it id be hard to tell that. I suppose he meant that the ould fellow drank too much port. What d'you think ?

Norris. Now, now, I join issue with you at once. You are making—pardon me if I speak rather with emphasis, not to say assurance—you are making a mistake common to amateurs seeking an interest in the picture whereas you should look for it in the spectator. Forgive me won't you, if I thought it worth while to get you right ? I feel very strongly on this matter.

Tully (*scratching his head*). I suppose you must be worked up like that or you'd see nothing. Is the spectator not to look at it at all ?

(*Enter McWhirter, carrying despatch box.*)

Tully (*relieved to change the subject*). How are ye to-day, McWhirter ?

McWhirter. A'll not tell ye.

Morphy. Ho, ho! Why not, McWhirter . . . why not? Surely you hadn't a late night?

McWhirter. A prefer to keep ma counsel to masel'.

Morphy. That is a new departure from your old habits, McWhirter.

McWhirter (cheerfully). A'm upset by McNab's death.

Norris. Yes, yes, it was extraordinarily sudden.

McWhirter. And besides, when there's business to do a' make it a rule to keep ma personal feelings aloof from it.

Morphy. Yes, yes, let us proceed. I take the chair. Be seated gentlemen. Read the minutes of the last meeting, McWhirter.

McWhirter. If ye will permit me to make a remark, Mr. Chairman—I think yer haste is indecent. What about a resolution of condolence with the relatives of our late colleague—Mr. McNab—which is called for all the more as he left them no money, a man from my own town too, with whom it was a pleasure to work.

Morphy. Of course, but all in its due time. It would be most unbecoming to let the minutes of the Board succeed to a solemn resolution which it would be better to leave separate, outstanding and apart.

Norris and Tisdall. Hear, hear!

Tully. I'm with you, Mr. Morphy.

McWhirter. That's all very well. I know ye want to make a speech.

Norris and Tisdall. You must yield to the ruling of the Chairman.

Tully. Obey the chair.

McWhirter. I'll obey nobody, but a'll read the minutes of last week's meeting. (*Reads*): "The 156th meeting of the public Board of the Townsend Thanatorion was held on the 5th instant, Mr. Tumulty in the chair.

"It was proposed by Mr. Norris-Coote.

"Seconded by Mr. Tisdall-Townley.

"That the thanks of the Board are due to Mrs. Dickenson-Digby for the present of a mule canary to the Children's Ward. The motion was supported by Mr. Morphy, who made a few trite remarks on the subject of singing birds and childhood."

Tisdall. "A few trite remarks!" Morphy spoke most excellently as he always does—excellent and eloquent, with well-chosen words.

Morphy. As Chairman I cannot naturally comment, but . . .

Norris. McWhirter's comments should not be entered on the minutes.

McWhirter. Well, ye'd better get a paid shorthand writer if ye expect me to put down every member's speech. If ye'll turn your

thoughts from elocution I'll get on with the minutes . . . Proposed by Mr. McNab—the late lamented—

Norris. Is "late lamented" in the minutes?

McWhirter. How could it be mon—sure he wasn't dead——" and seconded by Mr. Tisdall—That in view of the increasing demand on the resources of the Hospital by the sick poor, and the valuable relief extended to so many of them, the thanks of the institution are given to all those who came forward with gifts and donations on Pound Day, *videlicet* :

Mrs. Odlum—Eggs.

Mrs. Tottenham Young—Cut chrysanthemums

Mrs. Harriet-Batt—One pound of bees-wax for the dancing-floor of the Nurse's ballroom.

Mrs. Chiltern Pim—A pair of mittens.

O'Callaghan-Davis, Esq.—Newspapers.

Mr. Forrester—A vegetable marrow.

Miss Eric Littleby—Playing cards and newspapers.

Mrs. Globe-Terry—A Japanese lanthorn.

These voluntary and totally unsolicited contributions are themselves the best evidence of the strong spirit of Christian practice and principle which has always inspired and actuated the patrons of this Hospital.

Chairman. Quite so.

McWhirter A motion of thanks to the

Matron for her efficient management of the Christmas entertainments was passed unanimously, with the exception of Mr Tumulty.

The probationers were interviewed and addressed by the Board on the high dignity of their calling.

Norris. These are the young ladies that Tumulty wishes to turn into dairymaids to secure a clean supply of milk.

McWhirter. The enquiry held to ascertain why the electric light failed at the Nurses' Ball revealed the fact that some of the resident students had been tampering with the electric switches. Apologies were formulated by Mr. Morphy and directed to be posted to the visitors who had suffered inconvenience—Mr. Tumulty objecting. The students were interviewed and admonished. The Board rose at a quarter to 12.

Chairman. All those who are in favour that these minutes should be signed say "aye."

All. Aye.

Tully. Pass them round from right to left.

Chairman. Why, you would think you were directing a decanter of port.

Tully. How bad it 'ud be!

*(The minutes are circulated and signed,
McWhirter lends his pen, which reaches
Norris.)*

Norris. A quill pen, please! I refuse to

encourage the use of these detestable American fountain pens.

McWhirter. That's signed more important documents than you'll ever be likely to sign.

Norris. That may be, that may be ; but it is beside the point.

McWhirter. What's the point ?

Norris. The point is that it is new fangled and vulgar.

McWhirter. G'lang !

Chairman (rapping the table). Order, gentlemen ! Order ! There's a letter here from the Local Government Board calling attention to the urgent necessity of adopting some scheme for preventing the spread of the hidden plague in this city.

Norris. I think considerations of good taste counsel us to ignore it.

Tully. Mark it "read."

McWhirter. How can I mark it "read" if I don't read it and how can I read it if it is to be ignored ?

Tully. Let them that put themselves in the way of that disorder put up with it.

Tisdall. But in cases where the innocent suffer for the guilty.

Tully (impatiently). Why should decent people be asked to put their hands in their pockets to pay for the blackguarding of blackguards ?

Chairman. Perhaps if we postpone its perusal until we ascertain the attitude of other great establishments in this matter.

Tully. One would think we were the Locke Hospital.

Norris. Talking of the Locke or Westmoreland Hospital reminds me—what a beautiful façade it has ! One of the most typical examples of its century in the city !

Tisdall. Ah, yes, the Georgian period and thereabouts. What is the next item on the agenda ?

Tully. I'd send that letter back to those evil-minded blackguards in the Local Government Board that wrote it and tell them we won't have our city insulted.

McWhirter. Would ye prefer it stricken with the plague ?

The Others. Hush, the chairman is about to address us.

Chairman (with sudden solemnity). It is my melancholy duty now, without any distraction or delay to propose a vote of condolence to the relatives of our late colleague, Mr. William McNab, to whose public spirit this hospital and *therefore* the suffering poor of this city, are indebted for the sum of thirty thousand pounds.

(Enter Tumulty, the others motion to him not to interrupt. He sits apart near the door by which he had entered.)

Chairman. His relatives are to be condoled with, for the loss . . .

McWhirter. I should think they are!

Others. Hush!

Chairman. For the loss of a man of whom it may be well said from our point of view, in the words of the Swan of Avon (*hear, hear*), "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it." (*Applause—chairman flattered.*)

Tully. More power.

Chairman. He died——

McWhirter. He did so——

Chairman. He died full of years and honours. He sat only last week in our midst. Yesterday we were summoned to hear the reading of his will. Apparently in vigorous health, he was called away from the institution which owes him so much, and in which he took such a deep, lifelong, and I might say, absorbing and undivided interest (*hear, hear*). One day in our midst, another——

Norris (*whispering.*)

Chairman. A mere slip of the tongue, a *lapsus linguae*.

Norris. Be that as it may, there is all the more need of precision in speaking. In our midst, might mean inside us.

Chairman. Indeed! Very well then. One day *amongst* us, another day he is gone. Who can account for that? Who can

presume to plumb or fathom the inscrutable designs of Providence? I ask you, who?

Tully. There I leave ye!

Chairman. He will be lowered to rest, but will arise, as a lasting memorial in, I hope, some edifice, some additional ward, wing, or building, as his enduring monument, so that others who come after him and us, others who take their honoured place like those who are gone before (*points to portraits*) may point to it and say, reminded by it of him, his charity, his goodness, his solicitude for suffering, his fatherly tenderness for those less endowed with the world's goods—*Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.* (*Applause. Chairman bows.*)

Norris (*rising*). In seconding, with all willingness, the remarks——

McWhirter. How do you spell *circumspice*?

Norris. In seconding the remarks of our respected and eloquent chairman, I am at the disadvantage natural to whoever would follow a Demosthenes, but yet, keenly sensitive to my own shortcomings. (*No, no!*) and only urged on by what is indispensable and necessary, the fact that a motion must be seconded—let this be my excuse.

McWhirter. I hope you won't say that these are not trite remarks.

Norris. Ignoring the interruptions of one

whose *res angusta domi* in youth preclude now even in affluence from an appreciation, or indeed a comprehension of the humanities and amenities, not to say even the civilities of gentle life, I persevere in my support of my learned, able, and more eloquent colleague.

McWhirter. If yer meaning me—ye'r not meaning me!

Norris. For a long time I have cherished a scheme, and I think our chairman too has seen the necessity for it—a scheme by which a long-felt want may be supplied and a great need may be filled in this very hospital. Everyone knows, everyone regrets, everyone agrees that a mortuary chapel, decent and befitting this great institution must be erected if an urgent need of the hospital is not to be ignored, if the dead are to be treated with the respect which is their due, a respect which I have always entertained for them during the course of a long life, from which now nearing the end of it. (*No, no!*) I refuse to be divorced. In what better or more becoming way could our late lamented colleague be commemorated than by the erection of a mortuary chapel? If Dublin is rich in anything it is rich in ecclesiastical architects and artists.

Tully. Hear, hear.

McWhirter. It's all ecclesiastical.

Norris. Gentlemen, let a pious fane arise

over the poor dead, let the splendours of stained glass break with glorious variegations the hodden grey of their common lot ; let Roman Catholic and Protestant share a communal sleep.

Tully. Hear, hear to that !

Tisdall. This is a matter that had better be discussed in Committee.

Chairman. Excuse me, Tisdall, by your leave we will go into committee to decide to what use the thirty thousand pounds may be put.

Tisdall. There is as yet no pergola in the grounds of the Nurses' Home.

Norris. Oh, that's a trivial matter.

Tisdall. Excuse me, it is not ! The grounds have not yet been purchased—though long promised.

McWhirter. That's being taken up by Mr. Tully who is negotiating for the purchase of the derelict houses beside the Home.

Tully. That's right. I hope to have the matter closed this week, though I am afraid the party is holding out for £2,000.

Norris. Are we in committee ?

Chairman. Oh, we are . . . I think we are.

Tisdall. I have no objection to support the project of building a mortuary chapel consistent with the dignity of this hospital if—firstly—I have some assurance that ample funds will be left for the very necessary improvements of the Nurses' Home and—secondly—that a second

and *separate* mortuary chapel be provided for the Protestant dead . . .

McWhirter (heatedly). And what d'ye think is going to happen to the Nonconformist dead ?

Norris. That is a vexed question !

McWhirter. D'ye think I'm going to let them lie in a compromising position between yer stained-glass windows ?

Chairman. Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen, something can be arrived at surely—some agreement—

McWhirter. There'll be no agreement, I'm telling ye ! I'll have no stained glass nor any kind of embellishments.

Chairman. But surely——

McWhirter. Surely what ? Ye'll surely find a falling off in the attendance of patients in this hospital if ye try any religious intolerance here . . .

Chairman. Perhaps Mr. Tumulty will give us his views ?

McWhirter. Yer not going to evade the issue like that ! A'm telling ye unless ye provide a third and *separate* mortuary chapel with muffled glass for Nonconformists this Hospital will be boycotted, and a'll see to it. Ye'll be wanting music next.

Norris. Surely the decorations of the dead-house cannot influence the attendance in the out-patient department.

McWhirter. Well, why are ye building one?

Norris. Because it is a longfelt want.

McWhirter. If Roman Catholics can feel it, d'ye think that Nonconformists can't?

Tisdall. Wouldn't muffled glass suggest plumbing?

McWhirter. It may suggest plumbing, but it doesn't suggest Popery. I'll have no Popery, living *or* dead!

Chairman (in resonant voice). Well now, gentlemen, the time has come for clear-thinking. Why hurt anyone's feelings, when there is ample means at our disposal to satisfy the requirements of all you three gentlemen? What is there to prevent us providing a tripartite mortuary building shaped like a shamrock, the symbol of Trinity and of our common Apostle.

McWhirter.—Well, why didn't ye say that before?

Chairman. I wished to hear all your views.

Tully. Ah! me sound man!

Norris and Tisdall. A shamrock-shaped chapel! An excellent idea!

Chairman (pleased). And now if Mr. Tumulty would give us the benefit of his views, unanimity, that rare condition, might be reached.

Tumulty. I have listened long enough to this and your other fatuous schemes. In no town is charity vainer or more misplaced. When

I think of the vast, useless sums that are spent yearly in the name of charity and nothing comes of them, but misery continues unabated—

Chairman. You must remember now that money left specifically to this Hospital cannot be allotted to your pet purposes, for instance, to build schools in the best parts of the city.

Tumulty. I have spent the morning trying to calm a discharged soldier who called last night while his little boy was dying in the children's Ward and he was refused admission.

McWhirter. How d'ye propose to run an hospital without regulations?

Tumulty. He will speak to you himself. (*Preparing to call him in. Consternation of Board.*)

Chairman. I do not know that the deliberations of this Board are open to the public.

Others. Certainly not!

Tumulty. What! You haven't the moral courage to face the parent of one of your patients! Well, whether you like it or not, I'll bring him in. A little reality will do you good.

Norris. But surely you will rule him out of order, Mr. Chairman.

Tisdall. If we were not in committee . . .

McWhirter. Let him come in—what harm can he do?

Tully. I'd like to know who he is first.

Tumulty. He is a man who left his young family to go out to fight. He returned late last night to find the house his room was in derelict and his son dying in this hospital. His eldest daughter cannot be traced.

(Enter George Foley.)

Tumulty. He went out to fight for you and the continuance of a system that betrayed him, did his son to death and sent his daughter to hell.

Chairman. Now, now . . . let there be no confusion of thought. It is quite evident that unless his son was already ailing in the first place he would not have been admitted to this institution; while his treatment, once he is admitted, is entirely a matter for the medical staff——

Norris. Which was never found wanting
(hear, hear !)

Tisdall. I am quite sure of that . . . It's no fault of the medical staff.

Norris. Day and night, night and day, with unrelaxing attention and vigilant eye, they watch over the health of the poor of this city.

Tumulty. He was refused admittance to his dying boy.

Chairman. This is a charitable institution, and as such is governed by certain rules and regulations which have been found by long practice to be satisfactory.

Tumulty. Why should this man be insulted by charity? Are the lives of the poor to depend on the sufferance of your good-will? Is charity to be ever an escape from responsibility?

Board. Our responsibility!

Tumulty. Yes. The responsibility goes with the Revenue. Those who hold a County's money are responsible for a County's welfare. The Government holds most of it—you hold some of it, and in such proportions you are responsible, for it is obtained under the pretence of its being useful to the community.

Chairman. First of all that is inaccurate. The money has been left to us for the poor of Dublin.

Tumulty. Why conclude at once that there is no other way of investing it for their benefit than in this hospital? Are the channels of charity to be so fixed and the means of relief to be so stereotyped by custom that the poor can get nothing from charitable bequests but an hospital or a Carnegie library? To establish one bed in this hospital costs £300, a tenement can be bought up and demolished for half that. If you spend £20,000 in getting rid of the surrounding plague spots, you will be able to close a wing of this foundation and so economise.

Chairman. If you refer to McNab's bequest it can only be put to the well-known aims and purposes of this hospital, which are——

Norris. Close the hospital. What a preposterous proposal.

McWhirter. Ah, he's not serious.

Tumulty. I am serious. I have sat and listened to you as patiently as I could this morning seriously proposing to spend thousands of pounds on three dead-houses when a few hundred pounds could buy up and destroy the very tenement house which caused the disease from which this poor man's son died. As long as you leave the corpse-converting slums, all the money spent in charity might as well be spent in decoarating dead-houses, which are a symbol of the inefficiency and fatuousness of the whole system.

Norris. Hold on! Might I be allowed, Mr. Chairman . . .

Tisdall. I think I can answer . . .

Chairman. Allow me, gentlemen. Now Tumulty, you are not really just. We have given up our time—remember there is no compulsion—most of us at great personal sacrifice and entirely on account of our public spirit, to manage a public charity.

Tully. That's an Oliver for his Roland!

Chairman. Remembering now that it is not incumbent on any of us to do so . . . a little clear thought will show you . . .

Tumulty. A little clear thought will show you that if you go on building wings and hos-

pitals the time will come when you'll have to get someone to leave you money to build slums to keep up the supply of patients. All your charity only yokes another horse in the hearse.

(Enter discharged soldier dressed in plain clothes).

McWhirter. As a matter of fact, we are just negotiating about buying up two houses adjoining the Nurses' Home for fifteen hundred pounds.

Tully. I'm afraid we'll have to pay £2,000.

Solider. Two thousand!

Tumulty. I have known for some time that Mr. Tully, the representative of Public Health on this Board, had interests in tenement property; and now his own brother-in-law—this unfortunate soldier—has informed us that he owns the two houses. Will you take no action?

Tully. Welcome back George. Did the censor let you pass? How are all the boys at the front.

Norris and Tisdall. One of our heroes! Get him something—give him something—give him—a chair.

Norris. Gallipolli, I suppose.

Tully. Sortin' letters in France?

Soldier. Two thousand pounds! I'll stop that game anyway. That fellow got them two tenements for wan hundred pounds.

Norris and Tisdall. Now a little patience—a little patience, my good man, just a little patience and you'll be heard.

Soldier. I've had enough of patience.

Norris. Hush, hush, you are overwrought ; we must make allowances for you.

Tisdall. Assuredly we will make allowances for one that fought for liberty, faced the barbarian and all—that sort of thing.

Soldier. Liberty be damned, what do I get from liberty? I haven't a house over my head! Where's my wife? Where's my poor girl? Where's my son and the baby that was born when I was away?

Norris. Dear, dear, did you loose a second child. 'This is unusually sad.

Tisdall. Added to the list of infantile mortality I suppose.

Soldier. 'The baby's dead, and that fellow there that I kept before ever he had a job, would'nt put out a hand to save them.

Tully. It was summer diarrhœa killed the baby, if ye want to know. D'ye expect me to go out on the streets wid a sweeping brush to prevent the dust getting into the milk? It's the Cleansing Department you ought to blame if ye blame anybody, and not me that only represents the Committee of Public Health.

Soldier. All I know is that a curse is on you for you treatment of human beings. Ye'll be

all wiped out and not one of ye left. The strong races that look after their own and that have homes to fight for will overwhelm ye. Yes ! the men that's not starved into fightin' will beat hell out of ye for ye don't deserve to live the way ye treat mankind. How can ye win when you're killing your own. The curse of God is on ye all and ye'll feel it—for ye have neither sense nor pity—the curse of God is on ye all—for ye don't care. (*Exit*)

Chairman. Dear, dear, not a word of gratitude, not a sign of recognition either for the kindness of the nurses or the surgical staff !

Tumulty. The tragedy is that you are all so well meaning. Can there be no reform without revolution ?

Tisdall. Reform ? Surely you do not mean that we are to be reformed. How are we to blame ?

Tumulty. As usual where the system is rotten no one is to blame ; but you are all to blame, for you are all part of charity's ineffectual farce. The only people who benefit from charity are the charitable people themselves. Take this case of Tully's tenement houses—

Chairman. Now, now, you must remember the empty houses are to be acquired at a valuation, regardless of the individuality of the owner, which is never allowed to enter into the consideration of the

Auditors of this hospital. To the second part of your question the answer is in the negative.

Tumulty. The full houses cost Tully one hundred pounds.

Tully. Is that as true as everything else ye said? How d'ye know what I paid for them? To hear ye talk wan would think 'twas a crime to own a tenement house. Mebbe they'd be in full blast as microbe factories still if any wan else owned them but meself. Wasn't it I meself that got them condemned the moment the first suspicion crossed me mind. . . .

Tumulty. The first suspicion of the Hospital extension scheme?

Tully. Is that an observation for one gentleman to make to another? Mr. Chairman, I must ask ye to protect me from this abominable innuendo. The only way to escape comment at the hands of this gentleman is to strip yerself of all yer possessions. Somewan must own property. There must be somewan to pay the rates on it, and provide the Hospitals with their grant.

Chairman. Quite so, quite so, Mr. Tully. Mr. Tumulty is hitting at the very roots of property quite unwittingly I am sure.

Tully. Like one of them bloomin' socialists.

Chairman. Property discharges very numerous obligations indeed, not the least of which is charity; as the poet has phrased it—" and so

the whole round earth is every way. Bound with gold chains about the feet of God."

Tully. As I was going to say if I was let, the moment the first suspicion that they were unsanitary crossed me mind I reported them meself and got them condemned.

Tumulty. Tenement property in Dublin is like cheese that grows in value as it rots.

Norris. Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order. A discussion upon tenement houses has been started with the object of making a most unseemly attack on Mr. Tully, whose public spirit leaves nothing to be desired. I have yet to learn that it is the function of a Hospital Board to buy up tenement property which is not absolutely essential for its scheme of expansion and in this we are supported by the example of the great religious houses in this country.

McWhirter. The island of saints and doctors !

Norris (continuing). We buy only the houses necessary to enable us to grow. Our Institution has been established for the relief of suffering. How can it discharge its functions if suffering does not exist ?

Tisdall. Quite so, quite so ! I should say that any other discharge of its functions would be absolutely *ultra vires ultra vires*.

Tully. Aye, that would a bit of *ultra violet* right enough.

McWhirter. Aye and perhaps lead to our being mandamused in the King's Bench with costs.

Tumulty. Oh, there you go, piling institution upon institution until you lose sight of the idea which was originally responsible for your existence, until the spirit that created you lies dead in the letter, until the whole country is one mass of charitable edifices. Where is charity going to end relief to begin?

Tully. Ah, there's something in what he says. of course, we could appoint one of our number who has a knowledge of slum conditions to acquire twenty thousand pounds worth of houses.

Chairman. Really, Tumalty, this is going too far.

Tully. Now yer talking! I propose that he be no longer heard.

Tumulty. Oh, don't bother, I'm going to leave. I just want to point out that all your benevolent formulism only makes the position more and more hopeless. The less you spend on prevention the more you will pay for cure. Until the citizens realise that their children should be brought up in the most beautiful and favourable surroundings the city can afford, and not in the most squalid, until this floundering Moloch of a Government realise that they must spend more money on education than on police, this city will continue to be the breed-

ing-ground of disease, vice, hypocrisy and discontent. I leave you to erect your tripartite edifice over the children of the city of blight.

(Exit Tumulty.)

Norris. Dear, dear !

Tisdall. What appalling ideas !

Norris. Where did he get them and who is paying for them ?

Tisdall. Ha, I am afraid there is a great deal of money being spent to no good purpose in this city.

Norris. German gold.

Chairman. A mere idle dreamer—quite unable to appreciate organisation.

Norris. Exactly. He has not the responsibility of administration.

Tully. Did ye hear what he said to me ?

Norris. Indeed we did, and I think we owe it to you to express our appreciation of the dignified way in which you bore with it.

Tisdall. Extraordinary restraint.

Chairman. Quite remarkable.

Tully. If it wasn't that I was a gentleman among gentlemen, for two pins I'd have given him a clather on the beak.

McWhirter. Let's pass a resolution about it.

Chairman. An excellent suggestion.

Norris. Very well then ; give me the privilege ! I beg to propose :—That we, the

Members of the Board of the Townsend Thana-torion, desire to place on record our sympathy, surprise and disapproval at the unprovoked attack made upon our respected colleague, Mr. Tully, by Mr. Tumulty and that notwithstanding the confidence of this Board remains unimpaired in Mr. Tully, our esteemed friend and honourable colleague.

(All arise and shake hands with Tully.)

CURTAIN.

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